



ERIK NASARENKO

VENTURA COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY

NEWS RELEASE



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Approved: PN
Date: August 14, 2026
Release No.: 26-111

Driver Sentenced to More Than Five Years After Hitting 124mph In Double-Fatal Newbury Park Crash

VENTURA, Calif. – Ventura County District Attorney Erik Nasarenko announced today that Leonardo Rodriguez (DOB 03/05/05), of Pico Rivera, was sentenced on August 13, 2026, to five years and four months in state prison for his role as the driver in a 2024 crash that killed two people on U.S. 101 in Newbury Park. Rodriguez previously pled guilty on June 25, 2026, to two felony counts of gross vehicular manslaughter for causing the deaths of Serenity Rizkalla and Michael Estrella.

Deputy District Attorney George Brietigam, a member of the Ventura County District Attorney's Office General Trials Unit, prosecuted the case.

"At 124 miles per hour there's no margin for error," Mr. Brietigam said. "The deaths of Serenity Rizkalla and Michael Estrella were the foreseeable result of the defendant's shockingly poor judgement and dangerous choices. This tragedy was preventable, and their families will forever live with the consequences. We hope today's sentence provides their loved ones with some measure of closure."

On October 31, 2024, at approximately 5:26 a.m., Rodriguez was driving a black Honda Accord southbound on U.S. 101, north of Wendy Drive, at approximately 124 miles per hour. Rodriguez attempted to pass a vehicle traveling in the slow lane by driving onto the shoulder. A tractor-trailer was parked on the shoulder, and the front passenger side of Rodriguez's vehicle crashed into the rear left of the tractor-trailer.

Rodriguez's girlfriend, Ms. Rizkalla, who was seated in the front passenger seat, was ejected from the vehicle and pronounced dead at the scene. Rodriguez's friend, Mr. Estrella, who was seated in the right rear passenger seat, was also ejected and pronounced dead at the scene. A third

passenger, who was seated in the left rear passenger seat, survived and was treated at the hospital for minor injuries. Rodriguez was also treated for minor injuries.

The collision was captured on a motorist's dashboard camera. There was no evidence that alcohol or drugs contributed to the collision.

Case: 2025023967

Defendant Information:

Leonardo Abel Rodriguez (DOB 03/05/05)

Pico Rivera

Charges pled guilty to:

- (2 counts) PC 192(c)(1) – Gross vehicular manslaughter

